From the President, August 2019

Dear Friends

Thank you to everyone who shared feedback following the conference.

The executive group met recently and here are a few thoughts to share with our membership after a good look at the comments made and thinking ahead for the future. The positive comments were very encouraging in saying that the event is helpful, supportive and useful for your practice as chaplains. It’s impossible to meet everyone’s expectations and hopes, but it feels as if the majority of those attending feel it is an event not to be missed, for the connections with friends, as well as useful content.

An interesting statistic came to light at the conference relating to those new to post saying that if someone new to post or chaplaincy generally stays in their job beyond a year, they are likely to continue for some time. The first year of any new job is daunting, but being new to chaplaincy as well can be a double challenge. Please make network connections with your regional group and find the support you need to keep well. I have been forever indebted to the regional group that I joined when starting out in chaplaincy.  The group was a great mixture of new people like me, and more experienced chaplains who gently advised and supported. Our meetings provided us all with a chance to share difficulties, listen to each other and feel part of a bigger picture rather than the occasional narrowness of our own organisations. Please feel free, as well, to be in touch with anyone on the executive committee for a chat and time to talk things through.
We have begun to turn our attention to next year’s conference in order to find the speakers we feel will be of most benefit. The theme will be around ‘Communication and Language’, thinking about the language that we and others use in spiritual care; the language we use in rituals; how to communicate the value of our role, etc. The idea came from a throwaway comment someone made to me at the conference which stayed with me. There are certainly lots of opportunities to present workshops, resource sharing and other useful elements we can share next year.

A few practical points regarding conference from Margery Collin, our treasurer…

Last year we initially reserved 70 rooms for delegates but we only used 60. The Hayes has a policy of charging a grading fee for not using rooms depending on when they are cancelled. We ended up paying a lot of money to The Hayes for rooms that were provisionally booked and then not used. I know it isn’t always easy to get training budgets sorted and expenditure confirmed, but Margery is urging people intending to come next year to confirm as early as possible and to pay in this year’s financial year. We have already booked sixty rooms for next year and hope that we will use them all, but we cannot afford to lose the amount of money we did last year. The dates for next year are **11–13 May**, so please book early when the forms come out later in the year.

I also want to mention the proposal for a Joint Conference that has been proposed between the CHCC, AHPCC, MHA and a couple of other healthcare groups. This is likely to be in September 2021. More news will follow as things are confirmed. If this goes ahead, we won’t hold a separate conference in 2021, but we may look at a retreat-style gathering for AHPCC members, as was discussed this year.

Sorry that there is a lot of administration stuff here but it’s important to keep you up to date. In the meantime, keep well and supported in your chaplaincy and please keep in touch with the executive. And (I can hear our editors saying), please do send things to share to the website!

All good wishes

Karen